

XLI.—1904.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CEYLON.

NORTH-CENTRAL, SABARAGAMUWA, AND
CENTRAL PROVINCES.

ANNUAL REPORT,

1896.

BY H. C. P. BELL, C.C.S.,
Archæological Commissioner.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF EGYPT

JOHN EDGAR HUNTER

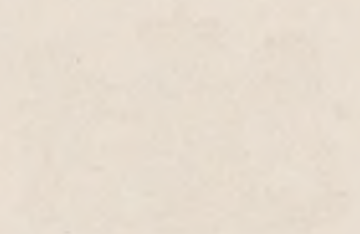
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PREAMBLE.

THE Archæological Vote for 1896 was raised to Rs. 35,000.

With this more adequate sum the Archæological Commissioner was enabled to push on operations at Sigiriya (Central Province), vigorously for a second season, and to further continue the search for ancient sites and inscriptions in the North-Central Province.

At Anurádhapura rapid advance in excavating the extensive ruin-strewn areas still untouched is limited in proportion to the money available. In November and December—wet months best suited for digging—all excavations had to be suspended owing to lack of funds.

2.—EXCAVATION.

Excavations were continued at—

(i.) Thuparama Ruins.

A commencement was made at—

(ii.) Mullegalla Ruins.

(iii.) Puliyankulama Monastery.

(iv.) "Elala Sohona."

(v.) "Ransimalakaya."

(i.) Thuparama Ruins.

Excavations were pursued near Thúpárama Dágaba in continuation of the work done in 1895.

By the end of the year the entire boundary wall of the sacred precincts of the Dágaba had been exposed along its four sides, except where cut by modern roads. This wall, 3 to 4 ft. thick, was built on a stone plinth, formed or reconstructed, of slabs, carved and rough, almost at haphazard.

*Mahindu Thúpa.**

The only other ruined site within this enclosure (beside the "Dáladá Máligáwa" and "Saṅghamittá Thúpa" finished last year) was fully exhumed. This ruin, occasionally termed "Mahindu's Tomb," lies immediately west of Thúpárama Dágaba.

It is said to have been partially dug by Mr. J. G. Smither about twenty years ago ; and evidence was forthcoming of the interior of the ruin having been disturbed within recent years.

The low rectangular site on which the structure stands measures roughly 87 ft. from north to south with a breadth across of 78 ft. At this day it is reached by three flights of steps, all irregularly placed. The broad western staircase of Thúpárama Dágaba descends on to it direct near its south-east corner ; towards the north-east end is a second set of steps, narrow and plain save for small *Nága doratupálas* ; a third flight, slightly wider and also plain, but with dwarf-figured terminals, mounts from the south, considerably east of the middle of the face. Originally, other flights of steps on the other sides may have balanced those now existing.

The raised platform afforded an open terrace, some 30 ft. in width, quite round the shrine which occupies its centre. Though manifestly once a dágaba, the only indication left, besides the *maluwa*, is the circular line of its plinth foundation.

The stylobate, 28 ft. square, had a stone revetment only 2 ft. in height, moulded in similar lines to those of the "Dáladá Máligáwa" basement ; above this rose a wall, or half-wall, of brick, which no longer exists.

On its south face the *maluwa* had triply recessed bays, the inner and larger forming the vestibule, the outer two the entrance portico and stairs.

The thúpa which once filled the centre of the *maluwa*, measured at the ground line, proves to be of the same diameter (17 ft.) as the small dágaba to the east excavated last year,* and 3 ft. less than that of "Saṅghamittá Thúpa." The stairs resemble those at the north-east of the site. Lying about on the *maluwa* are half a dozen *sri-patul*, and other offering slabs, proving the reverence paid to the shrine.

Pirivena A.

Each of the special *Saṅgharámás* of Anurádhapura to which the great Dágabas were attached, appears to have had its own chief *Pirivena*, or monastic residence. The ruins of these spacious buildings are clearly discernible at Abhayagiriya, at Jétawanárama, and at Mirisavetiya.

The Thúpárama establishment was similarly provided. Its largest *Pirivena* lies south-west of the Dágaba, a few yards outside the southern wall of its temenos.†

* This name has been retained, like that of "Saṅghamittá Thúpa," as convenient for reference. A portion of Mahindu's ashes may not improbably be enshrined at this site. "The monarch (Uttiya) taking half of those relics, at the Chétiya mountain [Mihintale], and at all the viháres, built dágabas" (*Mahāvansa*, XX., 46).

† Annual Report, 1895, p. 4.

‡ This "large pillared hall" was first cleared in 1873 by the late Sir J. F. Dickson.

This fine building has survived in almost perfect condition. Roof and walls have yielded to the hand of time; but little else is missing of the original structure. The *Pirivena* was an oblong building with a frontage on the east of 87 ft. 6 in. and a depth of 57 ft. 6 in. down its sides. Its brick basement (of the usual moulded type) is duplicated—in this respect recalling the stone-based Viháre (miscalled “Queen’s Palace”) on high ground at the Jétawanaráma ruins. Sixty pillars, squared to 1 ft. 2 in. and 11 ft. 8 in. from the floor, supported the roof. The twenty-eight outside pillars were let into the outer walls flush, and of the remaining thirty-two only eight stood clear in a central hall. Pillars so substantial must have sustained one or more stories.*

More than twenty years ago the discovery was made of additional walls inside the building forming partitions for separate cells. It is not possible now to follow this division with exactitude, but sufficient remains of the narrow brick walls to show that the cells occupied the entire interior space, except at the middle. They varied in length, but in breadth none could have exceeded 10 ft.

The stairs (8 ft. 6 in. wide) to the *Pirivena* are not unworthy of it. The six steps are quite plain and the “moonstone” is merely softened by semi-circular lines, but the balustrades are above the ordinary, whilst the large guardstones are exceedingly well executed. They represent *Nágá doratupálas* seven-hooded, and in the stereotyped attitude, with a pair of *ganas* (dwarfs) in the corners of the sunk panels.

Extra Cells.

Ranged close, but irregularly, round the main *Pirivena* were sets of cells, more or less roomy.

That to the north-east nearly hugs the southern wall of the Dágaba premises, to which it is connected by short cross walls at the back. This was a “three-room block” stretching east and west 71 ft. 6 in. by 10 ft. 6 in.—in plan like that behind *Pirivena* B, but longer. The block apparently had no verandah, being entered direct from the front (south) by low steps. Of the three rooms into which it was divided the central (33 ft. by 8 ft.) is double the size of the cell on either side.

A large and more elaborate block of at least half a dozen united cells lies to the south of the *Pirivena*.

This set of rooms also faces inwards (north), and seems to have stretched from wall to wall of the *Pirivena* enclosure. The cells were all of the same width, but varied in their length from 22 ft. to 13 ft. All the pillars were incased in the thin walls. This block had the advantage of a verandah at both front and back.

The facing of its front verandah basement and the construction of the flight of steps to each room seem to have been left to individual fancy. No doubt all these cells were added gradually to the *Pirivena* as the necessity for further accommodation arose: ruins no longer in use were probably indented on for stones in all variety. Side by side may be seen balustrades and terminals of plain, *makara*, and *Nágá* type, splayed, dwarf-faced, or monolithic.

In front of the *Pirivena* are traces of a few rooms at right angles to the southern cells; behind it is a third small block, detached. The lavatories for the use of all were placed further back, and may still be easily recognized by their “fittings.”

All the earth within the enclosure surrounding the *Pirivena* and cell-blocks has been removed to the original ground level. Their relative position is thus rendered fully apparent, and access to all made easy.†

Thúpáráma Dágaba.‡

Any notice of the Thúpáráma ruins would be necessarily incomplete without some reference to their choice “centre-piece,” the Thúpáráma Dágaba.

The Thúpáráma Dágaba, 62½ ft. in height, has an ornamental moulded base of fine white sandstone, the diameter of which is 59 ft. It stands on a circular platform of which the brick walls are of great thickness, and on the outside embellished with fine mouldings and pilasters originally covered with plaster.

This platform is paved with slabs of granite, and on it were four concentric rings of graceful octagonal columns. The first row (24 ft. in height) was close to the base of the Dágaba, the second row (22 ft. in height) about two feet from the first, and the third (14 ft. in height) about five feet from the second, and the fourth row (also 14 ft. in height), the shafts and capitals of which are monoliths, arranged round the margin of the platform. The capitals of the first two rows of pillars are ornamented along their upper edges with grotesque squatting figures, with arms raised as though supporting a weight resting on their heads. Those of the third row are ornamented with the figures of eagles having outstretched wings, and the fourth and outermost row bear carvings of fringes and tassels of very graceful design.§ Between the third and fourth rows of columns there was evidently a wall, no longer in existence, but of which the stone foundations, slightly raised above the pavement, may very easily be traced.

The object of these beautifully-carved pillars and wall was beyond a doubt to sustain a roof, which covered the whole of the columns, wall (both inside and out), altars, and in short all except the Dágaba itself—a welcome shelter to worshippers from sun and rain alike.||

These columns were ranged round the Dágaba in quadrants, leaving a rather broad passage to the structure at the cardinal points, where there were probably altar slabs close to the base, for offerings of flowers. No remains of these flower altars are now to be seen, except a bold moulding of stone above the level of the pavement. Similar altars exist at the Lanjáráma Dágaba, which, though smaller, was evidently built after the model of the Thúpáráma.

At the east and west ends of the building are flights of stone stairs reaching to the platform, 14 ft. above the surrounding ground, ornamented with richly-carved stone wing walls, and terminal slabs elaborately carved with human figures with cobra hoods bearing vessels containing the sacred lotus-flower.

On the platform to the south-west may be seen the remains of a chapel, near which are three finely-ornamented stone doorways, evidently removed from the wall which once surrounded the Dágaba.¶

* In one corner of the building in 1873 was “found the last few steps of a stone staircase leading to an upper storey.”

† A stone sarcophagus, similar to that—“King Dutugemunu’s medicine bath” so called—near Ruwanveḷi Sēya, was discovered within the *Pirivena* premises.

‡ The oldest Dágaba at Anurádhapura, built by King Dewanampiya Tisa, 307 B.C. It is supposed to have enshrined the left collar-bone of the Buddha.

§ The capitals of the first two rings of pillars nearest the Dágaba bear figures of “horned lions,” squatting full front with forelegs raised; of the third ring, conventionalized buds; of the fourth, dwarfs. All the shaft necks have a single ornamental loop on each of the eight sides.—*Archæological Commissioner*.

|| A theory that the columns were mere *lāts* crowned with Buddhistic emblems (*chakraya*, &c.) is negatived—if for no other reason—by the fact that not a vestige of such finials has come to light.—*Archæological Commissioner*.

¶ Condensed, with some modification, from Mr. G. Capper’s description of the Dágaba in 1875 (*Journal R. A. S.*, vol. XX., N.S., pp. 166–168).

The high revetment wall of the circular platform of the Dágaba was prior to 1895 completely hidden from view by the sloping bank of *débris*, which had in the course of centuries fallen from its upper part and the inner walls of the *maluwa*.

This bank has now been wholly cut away, and the ramp left clear all round. The wall has been well preserved by the enveloping earth, which for two-thirds of its height is but little deteriorated, except on the south-west, where a slip had occurred.

The design of the vertical wall face is very effective. Upon a boldly moulded pediment 4 ft. 4 in. high—rectangular socle, ogee plinth, semi-circular “bull nose,” and composite coping—stands a series of octagonal pilasters, about 6 ft. when complete in height from base to abacus. Their plinth is of the flattened cushion order, as was probably the bottom of the spreading capitals, of which not one remains. In the periphery of the *maluwa* wall were fifty-eight of these composite pilasters, at an average distance apart of 8 ft. The design of ramp above the pilasters is conjectural, for none of it is left.

The outer wall encircling the four rows of columns around the Dágaba was 3 ft. 6 in. in width, and stood back from the edge of the *maluwa* 5 ft. 6 in. *Makara*-headed gurgols threw rain water clear of its base.

(ii.) Mullegalla Ruins.

A party was detached to excavate the small block of ruins, lying in thick jungle, half way between the Jaffna road and the Malwatu-oya, some three miles out of the Town. This site was cleared of undergrowth in 1892.*

This little monastery, complete in itself, is evidently very ancient. The style of the buildings—not more than half-a-dozen in all—approximates to some of the ruins at Ritigala-kanda in plan and simplicity of stonework.

The approach is from the east by a short street direct to the entrance portico of the premises, which are bounded by stone walls. Within this area are but three buildings—two twelve-pillared *piriven* (20 ft. square)—facing each other, north and south, and flanking the stairs leading up westward into an inner enclosure. Directly behind these steps is the third building, the *viharé*. This consists of two parts, a front room, 21 ft. square, connected at the back by a monolith gangway (to which also steps mount) with a smaller and pillared room, likewise square (18 ft.) Both these rooms, as well as the *piriven*, stand upon rectangular slab basements. All the stonework is plain.

Outside the walls are other ruins, and one or two *pokunu*.

The dágaba was perched on a rocky knoll, mounted by four flights of steps, striking off at right angles from the premises, but united at the south-west. It was diminutive, had four altars, and a *maluwa* 17 ft. square.

(iii.) Puliyankulama Monastery.

The same party next commenced the far greater task of excavating the extensive Monastery at Bandára Puliyankulam (cleared in 1891†), which borders the Jaffna road at the junction with “MacBride’s Deviation.”

So far, only three of the four shrines within the inner enclosure and two or three of the numerous *periven* ranged round it in double line outside have been finished.

Porches.

These four cardinal portico entrances (*doratu*) at the middle of each face of the stone-revetted quadrangle stand at the head of projecting stairs, as at “Vijayaráma” and Toluville, and conform generally to the porches of both those monasteries.‡

The number and arrangement of the shrines within the temenos is exactly that of the “Vijayaráma” Monastery Dágaba, south-east; vihare No. 1, south-west; vihare No. 2, north-west; vihare No. 3, north-east. *Mutatis mutandis* the description of “Vijayaráma” applies equally to Puliyankulam.

Vihare No. 1.

Quadrangular building (48 ft. square), with half-walled verandah (4 ft. 9 in. in width) on all sides centrally entered. The stone steps are plain. Opposite each entrance are doorways into the walled fane, a square building measuring 37 ft. each way. Within, the floor was stone flagged. At the middle were recessed pediments, similar on the four faces, fronting the doors. These once served as altars and *ásana* for four Buddhas, seated with their backs to a small centrally placed *stúpa* not more than 9 ft. in diameter at base. Sixteen pillars held the roof.

Nothing remains of the images or *stúpa*.§

Vihare No. 2.

A square shrine (34 ft.) with a bay vestibule (21 ft. by 9 ft. 3 in.) on the front (south) standing upon a similarly recessed basement, 5 to 6 ft. in width and 2 ft. 4 in. in height. It was apparently thirty-pillared. The only steps on to this outer gangway are to the south, but the *viharé* itself has (following the “Vijayaráma” plan) stairs in front and on the east as well. The shrine was paved throughout inside.

Part of a *yantra-gala* found outside the building explained the total disappearance of the *piḷima* which once rested above it in the sanctum.||

Vihare No. 3.

An oblong *viharé* (45 ft. 4 in. by 37 ft.) of the better class of this familiar type.

It was supported on twenty-four squared pillars, of which the outer sixteen were engaged at their back to the walls of the shrine.¶ A stone-built portico with moulded basement, on to which the stairs mount, projects on the south. The *makara* balustrades have a lion *passant guardant* on their exterior face, and the terminals are *Nága doratupála* stones; but the “moonstone” has no ornamentation whatever.

* Annual Report, 1892, p. 1.

† Annual Report, 1891, p. 3.

‡ Similar cellas to those found beneath the floor of the “Vijayaráma” porches (Annual Report, 1891, p. 4 ¶) were opened here. Each of the four contained a bronze figure of its proper “guardian god;” but, in this instance, not double-bodied, and unaccompanied by the animals (elephant, horse, lion, bull).

§ Below the floor level at the centre of the shrine was a cella of brick, which had been rifled.

|| A brick cella, centrally placed, under the pavement, contained a representation of the Buddhist *dharmma chakraya* in bronze.

¶ In a brick-built cella, somewhat similar to that of *Viharé* No. 2, in the middle of the *viharé* was a metal *pátraya* or begging bowl.

(iv.) "Elala Sohona."

The examination of the tree-covered hillock, anciently one of the larger Dágabas of Anurádhapura but now popularly known as "Elála's Tomb" (*Elála Sohona*), was also started.* This site traditionally connected with the Tamil Ruler slain in single combat by the Sinhalese King Dutugemunu is situated a few hundred yards south of the Sacred Bó-tree, adjoining the Kurunégala road.

Two broad trenches are at present being run into the circular mound on the east and north sides; subsequent action will much depend on the result of the trenching. If carried to completion as in the case of "Kiribat Vehera," it will be a formidable undertaking.

(v.) "Ransimalakaya."†

Near the central market place, at the junction of five roads, was a pillared site, with signs of a heavy moulded stone basement. This relic of antiquity had for years been abused as a cattle pound—untidy, insanitary, an eyesore of long standing. It was decided to remove the reproach.

Digging revealed a large quadrangular ruin (82 ft. 4 in. by 64 in.) with bold stone-faced revetment, ovolo parapet, and four flight of steps. The building has been freed of surface and surrounding *débris*, its disordered slab walls and stairs neatly reset, and the high road on the north held back from it by retaining masonry. The raised structure, no longer defiled, stands out a handsome monument of ancient Anurádhapura in the heart of the modern Town.

If regularly laid out, the building originally must have possessed no less than 80 squared pillars, arranged in eight rows of ten from the northern or southern entrances. As there are no traces of brick walls the building was doubtless an open hall, with a wooden railing (of which the mortices are to be seen) round it and immediately inside the quarter round stone parapet of the basement. The stairs, wings, and terminal stones are quite plain.

3.—CIRCUIT WORK.

August and September were devoted to the exploration of the Vilachchiya Kóralé, the largest division of Nuwarakaláviya and its wildest part.

The greater portion of this extensive Kóralé is virtually *terra incognita*, quite uninhabited, and never trodden save when invaded during the "close" season by gangs of Moors from the west coast bent on the illicit extermination of game.‡

Magnificent tanks, such as Panikkankulama, Maha Vilachchiya, and Kudá Vilachchiya, long breached and abandoned, testify to the ancient prosperity of this part of the Island, now cursed by almost absolute want of water in the dry months (June–September).

Archæologically the Vilachchiya Kóralé is comparatively barren, owing to general scarcity of rock; though more antiquities will doubtless come to light in time when this depopulated district gradually becomes once more occupied.

Leaving the Anurádhapura–Puttalam road on the 24th of August, and moving with baggage coolies, the expedition traversed in turn the *Galgé Wanní*, *Moragolla Wanní* (which includes the *Vil Pattuwa* or "lake district"), *Vilachchi Wanní*, and part of the *Pichchampatti Tulána*, emerging finally on the Madawachchi–Mannár road. But one village was struck in the five weeks' wandering between 31st August and 4th October.

Three or four days were given to Tantri-malai, by far the most interesting ancient site in the Vilachchiya Kóralé. Here, *inter-alia*, are huge rock-hewn figures of Buddha, seated and prone, much resembling those at the "Gal-viháre," Polonnaruwa.

With this circuit the Archæological Survey has completed the exploration of the seventeen Kóralés forming *Nuwarakaláviya* (i.e., the whole of the North-Central Province, excluding Taman-kaduwa) or an extent of country covering approximately 3,000 square miles.‡

Gambirigas-vewa.—A small twelve-pillared ruin close to the *pin-pára* from Taláwé to Sipháragama.

Karagahewa.—On the same cross road. A small Buddhist temple of Kandyan type, with an unenviable notoriety.§

Relapanawa.—The present temple is of the ordinary Kandyan design. Some old remains, a dágaba, and a short slab inscription of the 10th century.||

Andara-gala.—An extensive rock adjoining the high road. Deep cut grooves (as at Sigiriya) to take the foundation walls of some structure, dágaba, and other signs of ancient occupation.¶

A rock record has been wantonly destroyed.

Namada-gala.—Also called Adampané-gala. At this rock is a cave, dágaba, and an inscription of the early centuries A.D. in fair condition.

Galle-vewa.—Piece of a broken pillar (brought from Diwul-vewa, where the bottom part is still in the ground) inscribed. The name of the King ("*Abhá Salamewan*") is legible.

Vera-gala.—Near Galle-vewa. Small rock with ancient remains—dágaba, rock-cut steps, slabs, and a little tank (*Pansala-vewa*).

Ottappahuwa Vihare.—Adjoins the Western Minor road which connects the high roads from Anurádhapura to Kurunégala and to Puttalam.

The existing viháre and pansala are comparatively modern; but the site is ancient.

The bare rock on which the temple stands rises gently from the road to the temple premises. Beyond on an upper rock reach is the viháre (clay walled), containing an array of images, &c. North of the viháre are a fine *gal-pokuna* (supplying the temple with water always); south, a dágaba on a square *maluwa*. Stone altars are noticeable near, and further on two caves below the rock ridge.

* Perhaps the Thúpa built by Kanittha Tissa (165–193 A.D.) in the Dakshinárámá (*Dípavansa*, XXII., 24). Elála's body was cremated and his ashes deposited in a tomb at the spot where he fell, "near the southern gate of the city" (*Máhávansa*, XXV., 69–73). This site would, therefore, be in the neighbourhood of the "Dakshina Vihára," constructed by the warrior Uttiya half a century later in the reign of Wattagamini Abaya (*Máhávansa*, XXIII., 90; *Dípavansa*, XIX., 19).

† The real name of this ruin is unknown. "*Ransimalakaya*"—the grandiose denomination now applied to the structure—is of recent adoption by learned Buddhists at Anurádhapura. It will serve for the nonce. In 1890 and later the monks were content to call it merely "*Bhojana Sáláwa*" or Refectory.

‡ Prior to the present circuit no official is believed to have traversed this "back of the beyond" since the late Mr. R. Morris, when Government Agent in "the sixties," entered the *Vil Pattuwa* on a semi-shooting expedition.

§ Some years ago the incumbent brutally murdered a boy, who had accidentally witnessed an illicit amour. Once discharged for want of evidence, the monk was ultimately hanged.

|| A duplicate of this inscription is in the Colombo Museum.

¶ At this rock, as at many others, are to be seen single cup-like holes (*ková*)—once perhaps treasure depositories.

There are two or more inscriptions, weathered. The temple is said to possess some good *ola* manuscripts.

Bilibewa.—Inscribed square pillar—perhaps the handsomest yet discovered in the Island—in excellent preservation. Crowned with a carved *kalasa*, or round vase, the writing covers three sides; and there are in addition sunk figures of sun, moon, *watahapota*, *dog*, and *crow*—all emblematic. The inscription is very clear. It belongs to the seventh year of “*Abhá Salamewan*” (Kasapa V., 929–939 A.D.), son of “*Siri Sang Bo*” and “the twice crowned queen.”*

Kurulpetta-gala.—An extensive rock stretch surging up in undulations from east to west. At the top, a large *gal-pokuna* and *dágaba*. To north, a second *dágaba* with circular *maluwa*. Further on, temple premises, a cave *viharé*, and two more *dágabas* or *sohon*.

The *gal-viharé*, 40 in. by 30 in., is crowded with images—a recumbent Buddha (26 ft. in length) and no less than a couple of dozen *ot*, and *hiti*, *pilima*. One of the sedent Buddhas is of stone, in perfect condition. The stone door frame at the entrance is neatly moulded.

Brahmanayagama.—An abandoned village between Ottappahuwa and Angomuwa. In *landa* is lying an inscribed pillar, wilfully broken not long ago. The record is dated the 6th year of “*Abhá Salamewan*.”

Tumbulle-gala.—A striking rock, rising steeply everywhere. One of the three sentinel hills (*Andiyá-gala*, *Mēda-gala*, *Tumbullé-gala*) on the boundary of Eppáwala and Vilachchi Kóralés near the isolated village Mēkichchéwa.

Three flights of rock steps, sharply cut and well preserved, lead to the summit on which is a large *dágaba* overgrown with *daluk* and grass.

On the further side of the rock, a little below the summit, is a strangely peaked cave (8 ft. by 12 ft. high and 9 ft. deep), artificially scooped, at the back of which roughly carved in low relief is the half figure of some noted personage wearing a tall headdress. This may well be the “*Andiyá*” or fakir, the memory of whose sojourn at this wild solitary spot is perpetuated by the name of the adjoining hill.*

Near the rock staircase is a long cave, once used as a *viharé*, with a short inscription over the brow. On the rock close by are remains of another early record. Below the *viharé* cave is a second *dágaba* mound.

There are signs of the other two hills having also been once occupied.†

Ihala-gala.—A stretch of low rock, running north and south for 200 yards, not far from Amunukolé. A cave, strewn with bricks and several stone images, clearly served as the ancient *viharé*. At different points are three or four inscriptions, besides a *dágaba* and small figured slab of “*Padmapáni*” in relief.

Panikkankulama-vewa.—Twice visited (*August 21st; 29th*) the large *pálu* tank Panikkankulama—one of many in the Vilachchiya Kóralé unexamined by Europeans.

This tank, breached long ago, lies less than two miles off the Anurádhapura-Puttalam road. When in working order anciently its contour must have extended to the present villages Máragahavewa and Tammannéwa and beyond the track of the modern high road.

At least three streams fed Panikkankulama-vewa, Horavila (or Kokkebe) éla, Kurahan-ambarana-éla, and a Pan-éla. The last enters the tank between Katukeliyáwa and Katupattéwa, whilst the two former after meeting at a water-hole, Góná-vetichcha-kalliya, pass through the *kaḍavala*, or breach, and so continue to the Kalá-oya. The breach is 150 ft. or so in width, and occurred where the *pas-kanda* (earthen embankment) joined rock to the south. Further south still is the *wán-éla* (spill stream).‡ The *goda-horowwa* (high-level sluice) is about half a mile north not far from the Horavila-éla: here the bund is some 30 ft. in height. The *bisokotuwa* is choked with silt. The double outlet conduit (*nalal*) on the outside (*pahapola*) of the bund has huge lateral slabs to turn the water westwards. Below the breach are a succession of pools; at one (*Lunu-wala*) are remains of a stone bridge.

Near the bund, a site styled “*Máligáwa*,” proved to be covered with much scapped stone ready for use.

Halmilla-gala.—Two miles from Nochchigama. A very spacious rock surface. Large *gal-pokuna* (with water lilies), two *dágabas*, and a *viharé*. To south a “well found” *pansala* and good *bana-maduwa*. Two rock inscriptions, both imperfect. The pond separates the *dágaba* on the highest part (*Usgala*) of the rock from the western portion, on which are placed a *dágaba* and Kandyan type *viharé*—both modern erections and unworthy the old associations of Halmilla-gala.

A couple of the unexplained deep circular holes, met with not infrequently at ancient sites, occur; but here with mortices for four posts of canopies which once overshadowed them.§

Padiketu-gala.—Between Badahēlagama and Galavewa. A small high rock, with cut steps up it.

Talgas-vewa.—In *landa* at the end of the village fields is a low site which yields to digging an unlimited supply of grotesque toy figures in earthenware, potsherds, &c. No tradition whatever seems to exist regarding this unique “idol factory.”

“**Gal-vihare.**”—At Kiralá-gala, eight to ten miles from Hunuwilagama. Several patches of rock, jungle separated. On the largest a fine *dágaba* (rifled) approached by steps, *gal-pokuna*, and other remains. Among these are noticeable a stone statue (broken) of a goddess, a stone *chatra*-shaped altar,|| and a rock inscription of eight lines well preserved. West of this is a second *gal-wala*, with an escape groove carved in the form of a cobra.

Ambagaha-vewa.—A modern *pansala* at the site of an ancient temple, to which *dágaba*, pillar stumps, and images testify. This temple has some old books.

Vera-gala.—About two miles from Galkadawala. The rock is fairly large, and entirely jungle bound. Remains of a *dágaba*, rock cisterns. There are two rock inscriptions in somewhat perfect preservation.

Horivila Vihare.—The temple (*pansala* and small modern type *viharé*) stands on a little rock, with a picturesque boulder-crowned *Bódhi-maluwa* near the path from Walanteliyáwa. Below the west slope of the rock is a cuniform cave. This temple also is said to own some rare old manuscripts.

* See Archaeological Survey, Seventh Report (Sessional Paper XIII., 1896, pp. 66, 67).

† The Mēkichchéwa villagers call the hill with the figure, *Andiyá-gala*; and *vice versa*.

‡ On the rock near the spill is one of the cylindrical holes noticed at Nágadarana-gama (Annual Report, 1892, p. 8) and elsewhere.

§ See † above.

|| There is another of these perforated stones at Eliya Divulvewa (Eppáwala Kóralé). Actually altar slabs, they seem to have been intended to represent the *chatras* which crowned the pinnacles of Indian stúpas in ancient times. See carvings at Bharut, Sanchi, &c. From their resemblance to a potter's wheel the natives call these stones “*hakka poru*”

The old incumbent (whose pupils are now in possession of Halmilla-gala and Ambagaha-veva temples) has been here since childhood.

Maha Horivila-veva.—Diverged to examine Maha Horivila-veva, a fair sized tank, breached.

Enda-gala.—Near Katupattéwa. A dolmen altar (*enda-gala*) fronting due east on a small rock patch; also two boulders which once sheltered recluses.

“Gal-ge” Wannī.

August 31.—Left Katupattéwa, the last village in this direction, to plunge into “the unknown”—the Galgé Wannī and other backwoods of the Vilachchi Kóralé. First traverse Ulpāt-veva (abandoned tank), thence through Telbilyeva (also *pálu*) to Panella-oya (a fine stream bed now dry), and on to a small rock hummock (*Gala-wala*) with a “pocket” of cool pure water—the only oasis in twelve miles of shadeless barren country marked by *katupat*, *vembu*, and *daman* interminable.

There is said to be at this season no other “water-hole” for miles except at *Konvetiya-gala*, a small rock three or four miles from *Gala-wala*.

The Panella-oya is formed by the *elawal* flowing from the two largest abandoned tanks of the Galge Wannī, Maha Timbiri-veva* and Andaragolléwa.* Lower down its course it is fed by similar streams from two more large *vev*, Ikirigolléwa* and Kurulukudu-veva, both also breached.

Kurulukudu-veva.—Must have been an important tank. Breach now wide. At the south end of rocky *hinna* is a *nāga-gala* slab with seven-hooded cobra cut in relief.

“Gal-ge.”—*September 5.* Examined the “Gal-gé” rocks which give the Galgé Wannī its name. These stand alone in Galgé-pitiya (open space, with small rock cropping out here and there) about sixteen miles west of Katupattéwa and four from *Gala-wala* rock through more thorn jungle and a *pálu* tank Suda-urá-veva.

On the highest point is a rifled *dágaba* with signs of other ruined sites near, rock-cut steps, and pillars. Fifty yards east of the *dágaba* there is a nest of boulders, beneath which are five caves—one the old cave *viharé*. Here are portions of brick walls, and two cores of wooden images. One cave bears an inscription of three lines.

Maha Divul-veva.—On five miles to Maha Divul-veva—the first water, but a mere jungle pool, befouled by all the *feræ* of wild country. A solitary sixteen-pillared building—a *viharé*—with a headless broken Buddha. This and the “Gal-gé ruins” are the only ancient remains known in these parts.

Moragolla Wannī.

Vil Pattuwa.—*September 7.* Reach the *vil* in the Vil Pattuwa of the Moragolla Wannī. Passing Nelum-vila and Kokkári-vila camp at Kumbuk-vila, the prettiest of all these peaceful meres.

September 8 to 13.—Engaged in measuring and taking notes of the eleven *vil* of the North-Central Province and fixing their relative positions and distances. This information may prove of use to other Government officers who may desire to visit them.

Vil.	Contour. <i>a</i>	Distance and Direction.		
Nelum ...	536 yards	Kokkári ...	803 yards	N.
Kokkári ...	2,829 yards	Kumbuk ...	1,875 yards	E.N.E.
Kumbuk...	1,002 yards	Timbiri ...	617 yards	E.N.E.
Timbiri ...	813 yards	Borupan ...	843 yards	E.N.E.
Borupan...	933 yards	Maha Patēssa <i>b</i>	893 yards	N.W.
Maha Patēssa	867 yards	Kudá Patēssa	687 yards	W.
Kudá Patēssa	493 yards	Eriyakalam-pu	371 yards	N.
Eriyakalam-pu	—	Demata <i>c</i>	641 yards	N.E.
Kurutu-pandi	—	—	—	—
Demata ...	618 yards	Lunu	421 yards	N.E.
Lunu ...	1,573 yards	—	—	—

a September, 1896: the lakes were at their lowest.

b From Timbiri-vila.

c From Maha Patēssa.

None of these lakes have yet been surveyed: in truth, the whole of this lone district remains unmapped.

The direct line of march, from Nelum-vila on the south to Lunu-vila the most northerly, skirts the *vil* in the following order:—Kokkári, Kumbuk, Timbiri, Maha Patēssa, Eriyakalam-pu, and Demata. Borupan, Kudá Patēssa, and Kurutu-pandi lie a little off the route.

The water of the two largest *vil*, Kokkári and Lunu, is brackish.

The calm beauty of these inland lakes is indescribable. The bright blue of the still water, the ring of white sand fringed with grass and forest, mingled greens and browns, the varied bird and animal life—and withal that wondrous hush which pervades and sanctifies nature uninvaded by man's encroachment—

“Oh! if there be an Elysium on earth
It is this, it is this.”

Sangaranparatti-oya.—*September 14.* Push on eight miles through sandy country, thorn, and *nelu*, across three or four *pitali* (now dry) along a probable ancient “*Yóda-ela*” (called by the guides simply *agala*, “moat”) to the Sangaranparatti-oya, the term by which the Taláwé-ela is known as it approaches the sea. Camp in the river bed at Deviyanne-vela-mankandiya.

Kukurumahan-damana.—After some days' search in the trackless jungles find an inscribed pillar, spoken of by hunters, at Kukurumahan-damana, near the left bank of the Sangaranparatti-oya. Elephants had thrown down the pillar and trampled it into the ground. The inscription runs to all four sides, and the pillar further has sun, moon, dog, and crow emblems cut on it. It is dated in the 11th year of King “*Siri Sang Bo*” (Sena I.). One small ruin near.

Gal-bendi-vila.—Guided through Kattéwa, *múkalana*, *daman*, and *vembu*, crossing the Kattéwa, and Moragolléwa and Írigahewa streams (united), Gónudenagé-veva (*pálu*) and Velvetiya to a rock patch. From its ruins and *patahas* the site has got its name “*Gal-bendi-vila*.”

* These fine tanks lay too far off our track to be visited on this trip without undesirable delay.

The ruined buildings (about half a dozen in all) are of the double-room type found at Vehera-bendi-gala, Ritigala-kanda, Máné-kanda ("Niráviya"), &c. The best preserved building (locally named "*Pattirippuwa*") has a plain basement of dressed slabs with rectangular plinth and coping, about 18 ft. square and 3 ft. 6 in. in height.

Vilachchi Wanni.

September 22.—Break camp in the Sangaranparatti-oya, and proceed some six miles up stream to new camp near Mayila-maduwa.

Sinadiya-gala.—A low hill of rocky reaches separated by gullies. Near a good rock cistern (*gal-wala*) is a long clear inscription belonging to "*Maha Raja Wahabaya*" (Wasabha, 66–100 A.D.).

Halmilla-vewa.—Another pillar inscription, known to only one man, was found after two days' search, not far from a *pálu* tank, Halmilla-vewa. The letters were originally shallowly cut, and are now too worn to yield anything but a line near the bottom. The record is of the 10th century.

September 24.—Move along the Anurádhapura-Silávaturai path, crossing Kudá Vilachchi-ela to Kaduru-wala—a shallow water-hole, half mud. Approximate position: three miles from Virasole, three from Súriya-damana, six from Helembéwa.

Borupanwala-damana.—A Wanni hunter showed, in pathless *damana*, a third inscribed pillar broken at the top. It is dated the 12th year of "*Siri Sang Bo*," a year later than the Kukurumahan-damana record.

Velana-damana.—The same guide pointed out at Velana-damana a ruined site, only interesting from a unique slab, with face carving.

The sculpture, represented in sunk relief, is in two panels. In the upper is a king seated cross-legged with left hand in lap, the right resting against the knee: on either side are female *chámara* bearers, one arm bent and raised. The large lower panel displays a spirited battle between a giant armed with sword and shield, aided by a kneeling spearman, against four foes (three of whom are dying or dead) whose weapons are bows and arrows. The giant has been hit by two arrows, but has just disembowelled one assailant. All the figures are almost naked.

There is no tradition helping to explain this highly spirited and historically interesting bas-relief, so strangely placed in the trackless wilds of the North-Central Province.*

Kudá Vilachchi-vewa.—*September 26.* Examined the bund, spills, and connected work of Kudá Vilachchiya-vewa.

The bund has been breached in three or four places. There are two stone built spills (*gal pennum*), the larger ("*Pattirippuwa*" so called), and a smaller one with a single drain (*nalala*) through it, as at Maha Galkadawala tank.† Both spills are formed of heavy dressed stones, each tier laid back upwards. Below the "*Pattirippuwa*" spill are remains of a stone built dam for diverting the water. About a quarter of a mile east of the spills is the *meda horowwa* (low-level sluice) with a slab-walled "well" (*bisókoṭuwa*) in perfect order. The *relapána* (breakwater pitching) of this tank is of exceptional regularity.

The tank was fed by the Ittikulama-ela, which now passes through its chief breach.

Maha Vilachchi-vewa.—*September 27.* Visit Maha Vilachchiya-vewa, the large sister tank to Kudá Vilachchiya. It has for centuries been *pálu*, since it was breached by the Taláwé-ela, which onwards takes the name Sangaranparatti-oya. The bund runs north and south, curling north-east. Like that of Kudá Vilachchiya it is immense, and though slightly broader at top, the *relapána* is built up of smaller stone. The yawning breach in the bund (200 ft. from crest to crest) is a quarter of a mile north of the sluice. The *nalal* of this *horowwa* are now silted up and not visible; but the *bisókoṭuwa* (13 ft. 3 in. by 8), strongly stone-faced and brick-backed, is in good preservation, the sides being only slightly displaced by tree roots.

Maha Vilachchiya received the water of many tanks. After passing the breach the Sangaranparatti-oya is augmented by the Mígas-vewa-ela, Perimaduwe-ela, Karamban-maduwe-ela, Kuttikulamé-ela, Ittikulamé-ela (which flows from Kudá Vilachchiya), Kattéva-ela, Gurukandégama-ela.

This and Kudá Vilachchiya-vewa, both long breached and abandoned, are probably the finest tanks on this side of the North-Central Province. No report has yet been made on either.

Helembewa.—Reach Helembéwa—the first village struck since leaving Katupattéwa on August 31—inhabited by semi-Veddó, here styled "*Wanni minissu*."

Pichchampatti Tulana.

September 29.—On to Tantri-malai from Oya-maduwa, crossing the Anurádhapura-Arippu road.

Tantri-malai.‡

September 30 to October 3.—North-east monsoon breaks. Heavy rain every afternoon. Engaged during the fine mornings in excavating the lower part and *siṅhásana* of the sedent Buddha, clearing the colossal prone image (*seta pilima*), both rock carved, and taking measurements and notes.

Tantri-malai is an enormous reach of flattish rock, stretching far and wide. Near the edge of a *gal-wala* is a single line inscription—the only record yet discovered here. The stone carved images recall, and may be contemporary with, the "*Gal Viháre*" at Polonnaruwa.

The main points of interest are:—

- (i.) "*Potgula*" (so-called), and cave beneath.
- (ii.) Sedent image on ornamented *ásana* with *makara torana* behind, all rock-carved.
- (iii.) Dágaba.
- (iv.) Recumbent image of Buddha, hewn from the rock.

(i.) "*Potgula*" Rock.

Mr. C. A. Murray's description is concise:—

A most picturesque little square block-house on the top of a conical rock about 30 ft. high. The little house is built of cut stones laid one on top of the other. The roof is flat, and is similarly made of cut stone. Cornices of carved stone project on the outside edge. It has one entrance.

There is a tradition that ancient manuscripts were kept in the house, hence its name "*Potgula*."§

* Perhaps it represents the prowess of Nandimittá or some other of King Duṭṭhugámini's redoubtable champions (*Máhāwaṃsa*, XXV.).

† Annual Report, 1892, p. 6.

‡ Notices of Tantri-malai occur in the Diaries of Messrs. W. S. J. Boake (1886); S. Haughton (1883); G. M. Fowler (1886); J. P. Lewis (1890); C. A. Murray (1889); R. W. Levers (1891).

§ Government Agent's Diary, December 18, 1889.

Below the "*Potgula*" (6 ft. 2 in. by 5 ft. 4 in. high) is an oblong chamber cut into the solid rock (measuring 12 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. in height) with remains of dressed stone, which closed in the front. This might have been the true "Library," the *campanille* on the crest of the rock being intended for some other purpose. Owing to its confined inner space (3 ft. 2 in. by 4 ft. 10 in.), it could admit only one person seated.

Opposite the "*Potgula*," on a larger rock, is the square basement of some building formed of large dressed slabs.

(ii.) *Sedent Buddha.*

The image with its moulded *sinhāsana* (throne with dado of fronting lions) is cut in high "sunk relief" from the steep side of the rock undulation. The figure is 8 ft. in height; its *āsana* 3 ft. 3 in. by 9 ft. in length, and 5 ft. 6 in. in depth. At the back is conventionally represented a well conceived *makara torana* with rampant lion supporters, facing outwards on either side; and, above, a couple of *chāmara* bearers.

The execution of the whole falls short of the finish and magnitude of the not dissimilar *ot pilimaya* at the "Gaī Vihāré," Polonnaruwa.

(iii.) *Dagaba.*

On the highest point of the Tantri-malai rocks is a small *dāgaba*, dwarfed by its surroundings.

(iv.) *Recumbent Buddha.*

Beyond the *dāgaba* (which stands between it from the sedent Buddha) is carved a colossal full-length figure. The image measures 38 ft. from head to feet. It has scaled badly from exposure to the elements. The right arm and nose are broken; and altogether the figure is in a sorry condition as compared with the *seta pilima* of Polonnaruwa, which is exceptionally perfect.

No rock record is known fixing the name and age of the Tantri-malai ruins, but they manifestly belong to much the same period of lithic sculptured art as the fine examples at Polonnaruwa.

Andiya-gala.—A rock inscription, badly damaged by "firing" for supposed treasure. At a cave an inscription of small letters in single line.

Billewa-gala.—Seven caves with seven or eight records; also a rifled *dāgaba*.

October 4 and 5.—Reach Ulukkulam on the Madawachchi-Mannār road, through Kappachchi (crossing the Malwatu-oya, now in flood, with great difficulty); and return to Anurādhapura.

4.—CONSERVATION OF RUINS.

Jetawanarama-Lankarama Area.

Action for the acquisition of the private land included within this area is being continued by the Government Agent, North-Central Province.

5.—EPIGRAPHICAL WORK.

Considerable addition was made to the already large stock of inscriptions copied. Until an "*Epigraphia Zeylanica*" can be commenced and the most important records reproduced by photolithography, it is undesirable to publish more than summaries of their contents.

Inscriptions.

Examined during 1896.

No.	Kóralé.	Village.	Site.	Class.	Sovereign.	Year.	Remarks.
1	Vilachchiya	Relapanāwa	—	Pillar slab	—	—	10th century
2	Do.	—	Namaḍa-gala	Rock	—	—	Early centuries A.D.
3	Do.	—	Andara-gala	do.	—	—	do.
4	Do.	Gālle-veṇa	—	Pillar	Abhá Salaméwan	(?)	Fragments, 10th century
5-6	Do.	—	Ottappahuwa Viharé	Rock	—	—	Early Centuries A.D.
7	Do.	—	do.	Altar	—	—	do.
8	Do.	Bilibéwa	—	Pillar	Abhá Salaméwan	7th	Kāsyapa V. (929-939 A.D.)
9	Do.	Bráhmaṇayagama	—	do.	Abhá Salaméwan	6th	1st century
10	Do.	—	Tumbullé-gala	Cave	—	—	Early
11	Do.	—	do.	Rock	—	—	Early centuries A.D.
12-15	Do.	Amunukolé	Ihala-gala	do.	—	—	do.
16-17	Do.	—	Halmilla-gala	do.	—	—	do.
18	Do.	—	Kiralá-gala	do.	—	—	do.
19-20	Do.	—	Véra-gala	do.	—	—	do.
21	Galgé Vanni	—	Gal-gé-pitiya	Cave	—	—	Early
22	Moragalla	—	Kukurumahan-damana	Pillar	Siri Sang Bo	11th	Séna II. (866-901 A.D.)
23	Do.	—	Sināḍiyá-gala	Rock	Wahab Raja	—	Wasabha (66-110 A.D.)
24	Do.	—	Halmilla-veṇa	Pillar	(?)	(?)	10th century
25	Do.	—	Borupanwala-damana	do.	Siri Sang Bo	12th	Séna II.
26	Do.	—	Tantri-malai	Rock	—	—	Early
27	Pichchan-	—	Andiyá-gala	Cave	—	—	do.
28	patti Tu-	—	do.	Rock	—	—	Early centuries A.D.
29-36	Do.	—	Billewa-gala	Cave	—	—	Early

6.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Anuradhapura Museum.

The conversion of one of the *ex-Casual* Wards of the old Hospital into a temporary local Museum is under consideration.

Ola Manuscripts.

Ten *ola* manuscripts were transcribed for the Oriental Library during 1895, and forwarded to the Director of the Colombo Museum early in the year.*

7.—SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE.

KEGALLA DISTRICT.

The Archæological work carried out in the Kégalla District in 1896 was confined to the clearing and restoration of the terraces and platform of that choice stone ruin, Berenḍi Kóvila, near Avisáwélla in the Three Kóralés.†

Mr. W. E. Davidson, Assistant Government Agent, reports :‡

A sum of Rs. 600 has been spent very skilfully by Mr. A. E. Mayes, D.E., in tracing out and refitting stones of the terraces and basement into their places and supplying vacancies. The whole of the upper and lower terraces have been cleared of jungle and cleared from deposits.

In addition to this special work, the conservancy of historic monuments has engaged attention. The British Fort at Ruwanvélla and Fort King are well cared for ; although the small outposts at Arandara and Heṭṭimulla have nearly disappeared.

8.—CENTRAL PROVINCE.

MÁTALÉ DISTRICT.

Sigiriya.

The Archæological Survey re-commenced operations at Sigiriya early in February. The season's work closed on 23rd May, owing to the fury of the south-west gale making work impossible in the teeth of a ceaseless storm of blinding brick dust.

Both in quantity and quality the work accomplished this season has surpassed that of 1895.

Last year little or nothing was known as to the extent and position of the many stone-banked terraces, rock sites, *pokunu*, &c., lying within the confines of the ancient city, nor regarding the plan and description of ruins to be excavated. A year's experience had dispelled much uncertainty.

The season's operations covered—

(i.) Continued clearing of the site of *Sigiri-nuwara*, and its survey ; (ii.) Exploration (iii.) Excavations ; (iv.) Copying the Frescoes ; (v.) Miscellaneous.

(i.) *Clearing and Survey of Sigiri-nuwara.*

The area freed of scrub in 1895 lies between the Rock and the village path from Sigiriya to Talkoté, on the west. Clearing has this year swept the undergrowth up to, and over, the *Maha* (or *Vil*) *bemma*, which enclosed the ancient city on the south-west, west, and north : further, curling round the north and south bases of the Rock it reached, eastwards, the path through *héna* to Pidurágala village.§

The felling and burning of this additional jungle has brought to light more moated islands, three gateways through the north and south-west outer ramp, and a cluster of pillars, with a fine *nága-gala* (cobra-carved stone) near the path to Pidurágala, north-east of the Rock.

Simultaneously with the removal of the close brushwood a careful theodolite survey of Sigiri-nuwara was commenced.|| All west of Sigiri-gala has been surveyed in detail ; round its lowest slopes a traverse run, the "gallery" accurately located, and a line carried past the north-west corner of the Rock, up the ladders and grooves beyond to the summit. The prismatic compass survey of last year of the excavations on the Rock was thus superseded.

(ii.) *Exploration.*

(a) Exploration of the elongated rock hummocks (styled by the natives *Mápa-gala*¶) situated south of Sigiri-gala proves it to have been included within the limits of the ancient city. Huge walls of cyclopean masonry defend these whale-like rocks, both on the east and west ; and parallel with the western wall occurs a well-defined line of lesser stones, which points to an ancient street or road leading on southwards.

(b) About a mile from Sigiriya, near the road from Inamalawa, in forest, are the remains of an old Buddhist monastery. Here, thickly overgrown, are monolithic pillars and a *dágaba* mound (partially breached) of no mean size adjoining a small tank.

(c) High up the eastern face of Sigiri-gala is a dark streak betokening caves. These were explored with some trouble.

The Rock scarp below the caves, being nowhere less than 30 degrees in slope, and in places sheer, ascent is impossible without the aid of a rope let down over the brow of the caves. The actual floor of the caves is 29½ ft. from the ground—a hand over hand climb by rope.

The caves—more correctly the one continuous cavern—contained no trace of previous human occupation, being virtually inaccessible. In length 197 ft. with a floor width averaging 11 ft., it has to all appearance ever been left to bird, bat, and bee. Overhead the beetling rock roof projects sharply 40 ft. or more, so strangely "pitted" and white by age that from the ground the roof seems coated with weather-worn plaster.

*]For particulars see Administration Report, Colombo Museum, 1896.

† Report, January 18, 1897.

‡ On the north, outside the *vil bemma* is an oblong enclosure with brick *débris*.

§ Archæological Survey, Report on the Kégalla District (Sessional Paper XIX., 1892, p. 63).

|| Pains have been taken to insert every rock, stone wall, pond, &c. ; so that no ancient remains above ground shall be omitted.

¶ *Mápa-gala* = probably *Mahapá-gala*, the rock where the Viceroy (*Mahapá*) resided.

(iii.) *Excavations.*

No excavations were attempted below the Rock this year. It is desirable to finish the excavation of the ruined citadel, on the summit of Sígiri-gala, before giving fresh attention to what lies at its foot and further afield.

Digging was re-started immediately north of the central *pokuna*, and east of the high-level area which, broadly speaking, occupies the western half of the summit, bisecting it from north verge to south verge in gradually descending terraces.

The entire low-level area lying between the pond and the eastern and southernmost brink of the Rock was completely excavated—not merely trenched—besides a small slice of the higher section the whole mass of hard-caked brick and earth hiding walls and staircases being dug out down to the original floor level. The depth of earth-cutting varied from 5 ft. to as much as 20 ft. in places; and, as before, every basket of “spoil” had to be carried to the east, or south, edge of the rock and thrown over. The area excavated this year covers (including the *pokuna*) $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre and upwards.*

The main lines and features disclosed by this year's excavations show that that part of the ancient citadel lying south of the pond, and east of the high-level strip, was laid out in a series of cross-terraces, east and west, varying in width and falling away southwards. From the *pokuna* to the foot of the last staircase (the longest yet uncovered) at the extreme south are seven or eight distinct terraces.

West, the higher ground, is still hardly scratched; to the east may have been rooms; whilst the centre is taken up with an open courtyard, or garden, and terraces, leading up to the pond, and round, on either side, by stairs and intermediate landings—all admirably planned to suit the physical conditions, and displaying marvellous ingenuity in the turning to full account the limited space and surface inequalities of the Rock's summit.

Five and twenty flights of steps have been exposed this year—one and all of limestone, except the single set cut in the gneiss rock down the west slope of the *pokuna*.

At the south-east corner of the Rock a second cistern was discovered beneath a heavy bank of *débris*. It is rectangular, measures 16 ft. by 10 ft., and like that on the south-west is completely sunk in the live rock.

A mysterious pit, or well, on the high bank near the north edge was dug out, in the vain hope that the native tradition regarding a passage into the bowels of Sígiri-gala might possibly here find confirmation. A natural wedge in the Rock's surface at this point had anciently been converted by thick cross walls of brick into a third cistern.

To ascertain the sectional construction of the citadel a deep trench, down to the bed rock, was run some distance northwards from the southernmost verge. The foundations of the brick walls were seen to rest on built rubble-stone, standing on the Rock matrix.

Finally the large *pokuna* was emptied. Undug, the pond had the appearance of a shapeless pool, with ragged sloping sides, due to the collapse of the surrounding brick walls. It contained some 5 ft. of half-stagnant water. It measures about 90 ft. by 68 ft. On the west and north-west the rock core rises steeply, and a deep slice had originally to be cut into it to get a squared corner for the pond, so that each side might be approximately of equal length and parallel. Along the other sides, where the rock was scooped out to a depth of no more than 3 to 4 ft., a massive brick wall was built as a bund to hold up a great head of water when the pond was full.†

(iv.) *Copying the Paintings.*

A commencement has been made in securing facsimiles in oils of the unique “frescoes” of Sígiriya, as they exist (with all natural imperfections) at the present day.‡

A vertical wire ladder was fixed so as to fall perpendicularly just inside the “gallery” from the shoulder of the overhanging rock some 40 ft. up and 50 yards from the rocks below. From that point the rock bends inwards to the sloping floor of the larger “pocket” “B” (38 ft. 4 in. by 11 ft. 8 in. by 12 ft. in height). At the left, or north, end of “B” is a narrow slanting ledge, only 1 ft. 6 in. wide by 3 ft. 6 in. high—the sole possible approach to the second and much smaller “pocket” “A” (20 ft. 9 in. by 3 ft. 6 ft. 8 in.).

At the head of the ladder, along the edge of both “pockets,” a low iron railing was fixed as an essential safeguard.

Six of the whole set of twenty-two ancient “frescoes” still preserved in “pockets” “A” and “B” have so far been finished.§

Briefly, these paintings consist in whole, or in part, of half-figure portraits—all female; five in “pocket” “A,” seventeen in “B.” They are painted at the back, sides, and on the roof of the “pockets” in colours most vivid—red, yellow, and green—laid upon a thick coating of specially prepared plaster.¶ All the figures are shown as moving in the same direction, northwards. Some of these, presumably court ladies, are accompanied by female servants of a different race painted in darker hue.¶¶

* Among “finds,” made during the season's excavations pottery predominates—half a dozen flower-pots, lamps, fragments innumerable of chatties, dishes, &c.—with iron and copper nails, bolts, &c., *ad libitum*. A few unusual articles were exhumed—the most suggestive being three or four “third-brass” oboli of the later Roman Empire.

† Excepting the rock stair on the west, the only steps down to the *pokuna*, now apparent, were from the north. On the high wall, at the south-east corner, are the remains of a limestone conduit, but too broken to restore. In the silt of the *pokuna* nothing of interest was found.

‡ The height and position of the “pockets” from the ground and the “gallery” prevents a complete eye view of all the figures being got from any one point. Comprehensive photographs and a painting were therefore taken from mid-air, on a “chair” swung over the cliff.

§ In 1889 Mr. A. Murray, Provincial Engineer, Public Works Department, managed to get into the larger and more accessible “pocket” by the aid of trestle staging and rope ladder. He brought away facsimile tracings of thirteen of the seventeen “frescoes” in that cave, which he coloured in crayons. These pastel drawings (now hung in the Colombo Museum) fail to reproduce the true vividness of the paintings. The tracing paper was affixed so clumsily that in removing it the plaster has come away leaving white-line “frames” around—and even across—the figures.

¶ Viewed from the ground the fair ladies, as distinguished from their dusker handmaids, would appear to be unclad above the waist; but a close examination shows ultra-diaphanous clothing dear to Oriental sculptor and painter alike in bygone days.

¶¶ The flowers held by the ladies and their attendants may signify that they are setting forth to worship at the ancient Buddhist temple on Pidurá-gala, the rocky hill situated a mile to the north of Sígiri-gala.

A fresco, hitherto unknown, was discovered this year in a cave beneath one of the boulders behind the "Audience Hall" Rock. Faint indications of colouring under a thick coat of whitewash, when carefully scraped, revealed a portion of an awning cloth, painted on the rock roof. Such *viyan-redi* are frequently depicted to this day over recumbent images of the Buddha in viharés. This ancient fresco proves that the cave was used as a Buddhist shrine.*

(v.) *Miscellaneous.*

(a) The area required by the Crown for the permanent conservation of the ruins of *Sigiri-nuwara* was delimited.

(b) A yawning and dangerous breach in the "gallery" floor and wall, between the approach ladder and the first flight of steps, has been built up, sufficiently high for safety.

(c) Besides copying the frescoes, Mr. Perera made detailed measurements and drawings of this year's excavations.

Nalanda.—The necessary land for further work at the "*Gedige*" ruin has not yet been acquired by the Assistant Government Agent. A bridle path to the site from the high road near the Rest-house was made at a cost of Rs. 86.

9.—STAFF.

The Archæological Commissioner has had no Assistant since Mr. Bosanquet's departure in June last year. His office staff was strengthened from July by a second clerk, Mr. A. Perera, and by a third draughtsman, Mr. W. M. Fernando, from December, 1896.

H. C. P. BELL,
Archæological Commissioner.

* This fragment is interesting not alone for its chaste design, but for the introduction of *black* in addition to the three colours employed in the "pocket" paintings.

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